CLAIMS:

1.   A system for managing security domains, the system comprising:-

a plurality of security domains, each domain comprising at least one network having a plurality of managed nodes provided therein;

at least one management node located in one of said plurality of security domains for controlling operation of said plurality of managed nodes in said one security domain; and

a firewall located external of said one security domain which is operationally linked to the management node in said one security domain, the firewall linking said management node with said plurality of managed nodes in said plurality of security domains.

2.   A system according to claim 1, wherein the firewall controls the network traffic by examining the source of the traffic, the destination of the traffic, and the operational content contained within that traffic.

3.   A system according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the firewall converts one management protocol to another.

4.   A system according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the firewall hosts Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP).

5.   A system according to claim 4, wherein, when the managing security domain hosts one version of SNMP and at least one of the managed security domain hosts another version of SNMP, the firewall converts one version of SNMP to another.

6.   A system according to claim 5, wherein the managing security domain hosts several versions of SNMP and the managed security domains hosts less secure versions of SNMP.

7.   A system according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the firewall converts SNMPv3 on the managed security domain to SNMPv2c on the managed security domains.

8.   A system according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the firewall hosts a subset of Internet Control Management Protocol (ICMP).

9.   A system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the firewall prevents communication between one managed security domain and any other managed security domain.

10. A system according to any one of preceding claims, wherein the firewall controls access of information by each node in a managed security domain.

11. A method of centralising access control information on managed nodes in a system for managing security domains according to any one of the preceding claims.

12. A system for managing security domains substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.